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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 006156

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DEPT FOR EAP
USDA FOR FAS/DLP/HWETZEL AND FAS/ICD/LAIDIG
USDA/FAS/FAA/DYOUNG AND USDA/APHIS
DEPT ALSO PASS TO USAID/ANE/CLEMENTS AND GH/CARROLL
PARIS FOR FAS/AG MINISTER COUNSELOR/OIE
ROME FOR FAO

E.O. 12958:NA

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [AMGT](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: THAILAND AVIAN INFLUENZA: SITUATION REPORT 2

1. On September 16, 2005, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) announced confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 90 birds in central Thailand (Saraburi and Kamphaeng Phet). This new detection was made in so-called native chickens (free ranging, backyard poultry) with minimum biosecurity precautions. The RTG reportedly responded by culling infected and suspected poultry. Thus far the source of this infection is unknown and pending further investigation.

2. Thailand has been conducting the current nationwide surveillance since July 1, 2005. In this third wave to date, there have been 36 officially confirmed outbreaks in 5 provinces, since the second wave of HPAI re-occurrence that occurred from July 2004 to April 2005. The affected provinces in this third wave, with the number of outbreaks indicated in parentheses, include Ayutthaya (1); Chainat (1); Kamphaeng Phet (10); Saraburi (5); and Suphan Buri (19).

3. According to Royal Thai Government authorities, all cases involved either free-range poultry or poultry raised in farms with traditional husbandry practices with poor sanitation and insufficient biosecurity. Breakdown by type of poultry population, along with number of outbreaks in each category, include: native poultry (28); quail (3); fighting cocks (2); laying hens (1); laying ducks (1); and broilers (1).

4. Four other HPAI outbreaks were detected in August 2005 in similar areas of Thailand and in similar types of poultry raised in low-biosecurity situations. The other August detections were in Ayutthaya, Kamphaeng Phet and Suphan Buri. Detection dates were August 10, 18, 19 and 30, 2005, involving 356 animals. There have been no recent reports of HPAI infection in commercial poultry operations and, as such, culling has been limited to small household flocks with relatively few animals.

5. A more recent, but not yet officially confirmed, case of HPAI has been reported in the press and on the website of the Mass Communications Organization of Thailand (MCOT). Thai media sources are reporting that The Director of Bureau of Disease Control and Veterinary Service, Dr. Nirandorn Uangtrakunsook, said Wednesday that more than 17,000 birds were culled Monday (September 19) after avian influenza virus was detected in a meat-producing poultry farm. Reports did not indicate how many of the 17,000 birds tested positive for HPAI, but that all birds were destroyed. Meat from this flock reportedly goes exclusively into the domestic market. The official suspects that the infection in this broiler flock might be attributed to a failure to control the movement of HPAI positive native (free ranging) chickens.

6. One Thai English-language newspaper (The Nation) reported on September 20, 2005, that Royal Thai Government's Food and Drug Administration announced that raids along the northern borders foiled a plan to smuggle avian influenza vaccine into Thailand from China. Thai FDA said that a total of 700,000 doses of the poultry vaccine contained in about 1,500 bottles were found to have originated from China and been smuggled across the Thai-Burmese border into Chiang Rai's Chiang Saen district. FDA Secretary General Pakdee Bhodisiri is quoted as saying that some 450 bottles of the vaccine, carrying the VEBIO and CAHIC brand names, were confiscated on June 23, another 429 the following day, and other 429 on June 25. Chiang Saen customs officers found the drugs left in a Chinese boat, he said, adding that the smugglers had fled before authorities, acting on a tip-off, arrived. Prior to the latest smuggling incidents, customs officials at Bangkok International Airport discovered another batch of 300 bottles, Pakdee said. All of the confiscated products were destroyed, he added.

17. There have been no reports of human infection with HPAI in Thailand since October 2004. The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) continues its surveillance campaigns. There have been a total of 17 confirmed human HPAI cases in Thailand with 12 HPAI human deaths.

18. Thailand-based HHS/CDC/IEIP staff Mark Simmerman is in Indonesia as part of the USG avian influenza assessment team. WHO has discussed the current situation of avian influenza in humans with the USG Inter-agency team and it appears likely that there is at least one cluster of illness. The human cases are under investigation. NAMRU2 is actively collaborating with the Indonesian National Institute of Health to collect and test samples.

Boyce